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THE POWER OF PERSEVERANCE:  
CREATING THE ROLES OF HIPPODAMIA AND PYTHIA IN  
*ATREUS*

by  
LINDSEY L. OETKEN

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS  
IN  
THEATRE ARTS

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

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The Power of Perseverance:

Creating the Roles of Hippodamia and Pythia in *Atreus*

Lindsey L. Oetken

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

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## ABSTRACT

Oetken, Lindsey L. The Power of Perseverance: Creating the Roles of Hippodamia and Pythia in *Atreus*. MFA Thesis, Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2020.

This paper is a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre. It is a comprehensive overview of Lindsey L. Oetken's process constructing the roles of Hippodamia and Pythia in *Atreus*, produced by Minnesota State University, Mankato in early 2021. From pre-production to performance, the document covers Oetken's artistic process through five chapters: an early production analysis, an historical and critical perspective, a journal of rehearsals and performance, a post-production analysis and a process development chapter, which encompasses the entirety of the graduate experience.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Chapter

I. EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS.....	1
II. HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	7
III. JOURNAL.....	28
IV. POST-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS.....	49
V. PROCESS DEVELOPMENT.....	58

## Appendix

A. PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS.....	67
B. PROGRAM.....	72
C. REHEARSAL SCHEDULE.....	74
D. RESEARCH PHOTOS.....	75
E. SCRIPT NOTATIONS.....	77
WORKS CITED.....	81
RESEARCH IMAGE SOURCES.....	83

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

This chapter is the early analysis for the roles of Hippodamia and Pythia in the U.S. premier of *Atreus*, written and directed by Yauroyebo Jordán. The play is translated from Jordán's original production in Spanish, first produced in Puerto Rico. The production premiers at Minnesota State University, Mankato in the Andreas Theatre, January 20 - 24, 2021. Hippodamia and Pythia will be portrayed by actor Lindsey Oetken.

*Atreus* is Jordán's interpretation of the Greek myth of the curse on the house of Atreus and Thyestes. Jordán read several versions of the story based on the Greek oral traditions. The play is not related to Seneca's *Thyestes*, which tells a similar story, except that it views Atreus as the villain and Thyestes as the hero. In Jordán's *Atreus*, the idea of "heroes" and "villains" is somewhat murky. As the character Atreus says in Act three Scene four, "There are no heroes or villains, only the consequences of our actions." In the end, the audience may not be sure who the protagonist truly is.

The men of the story are cursed before the play even begins. Atreus and Thyestes' grandfather, Tantalus kills his son Pelops (Atreus and Thyestes' father) and feeds the gods his body in a stew. He did this to prove the god's omniscience. This angered the gods. Pelops was re-born by the gods and a curse was placed on Tantalus' house. It

became destiny that the men of the family be murdered by another family member (Jordán, Protocol 12).

Since this is a contemporary re-telling of an ancient Greek story, the author has chosen to use contemporary, but formal language. It is also a translation from the original in Spanish to English. The formality of the language lends itself to the feel of Greek tragedy. However, the director wishes to keep the acting representational and truthful. The dialogue moves the action forward, so there isn't a lot of standing around talking. Something is always happening. Even when the actors aren't playing their designated characters, they are still busy moving scenery as "gods." The gods are always present. They preside over everything that happens in the play. Having the gods move the scenery is a way of showing how the gods control everything.

Manipulation is a big theme throughout the play, whether it be humans manipulating humans, or the gods manipulating humans. Right away we see Hippodamia manipulating Atreus into thinking he needs to confront his step-brother Chrysippus. Atreus then manipulates Thyestes against Chrysippus. The cycle continues throughout the play. The gods begin to interfere when Hermes visits Atreus about knowing the sun will rise in the west so he can be King of Mycenae instead of Thyestes. Then Pythia, who is a messenger of the god Apollo, comes to Thyestes to tell him how he can get revenge on Atreus by sleeping with his daughter. The son resulting from this union will be the one who eventually kills Atreus, but only because Thyestes manipulates him into doing so.

Another theme is fate or destiny. How much control do people have over their fate? According to this story, much is already planned for humans by the gods. If humans

go against the will of the gods, they become angry. They continue to meddle with human lives. As Thyestes asks Pythia in Act three, “Is there no other way?” He is referring to having to rape his daughter as the only means of getting revenge on Atreus. “There was,” Pythia replies, “but it is no longer yours to claim.” Thyestes could have had another choice if he’d listened to the gods, but he made the choice to go against their will, so now he is stuck with one terrible path to take. Of course, he could choose not to take revenge on Atreus, forgive him, and lead a peaceful life with his wife and the one child he has left, but he is obsessed with revenge. The Oracle of Delphi has already seen the future, therefore, it is going to happen. In reality, the characters could have made other choices, but they seem tangled in their many webs. They are so focused on what they want, revenge, that they are blind to any other choice.

Revenge and power are the driving forces in the play. Almost every character delves into the idea of revenge at some point. Even the softest character, Aerope, gets drowned in the idea of revenge, grieving over her children that were killed by Atreus. Instead of moving on, finding new ways to cope and live with their pain, the characters become obsessed with getting back at the people who did them wrong. Forgiveness is not an option. One of the characters wants the power that the other has, or potentially has, therefore hurts them. Once they have the power the other wants, that person is grieved, angry, and vengeful. The character Hippodamia strives for revenge against her husband, Pelops, because he sleeps with a nymph and has a bastard child with her. Not only is she angry that he betrayed her, but now the power of her sons, Atreus and Thyestes, is threatened by the step-son Chryssipus. Because she is a woman, the only power she can

achieve is through having children, male children who may ascend the throne. She can only exercise power if she has power over them. Therefore, she manipulates them into using their power to her will.

Hippodamia is a not quite middle-aged woman. She is probably in her mid-30s, maybe 40s. She is married to Pelops, who is the king of Olympia. Because the play is set in ancient Greece, in approximately 1300 B.C., women were not allowed very much power in society. While she holds high status as a queen, she cannot do much in the grand scheme of things because of her sex. She comes across as a very proud and strong character. Her strength and forwardness grows throughout the first act of the play, particularly after she vows to the gods that she will get revenge on Pelops and not allow Chrysippus to gain the throne.

She has led a deeply troubled life. According to research the director, Jordán, shared the first rehearsal, her father had an insatiable desire for her and would not let young men near her. They would have to beat him in a chariot race, and if they lost, he killed them. Her father was possessive and cruel. The sexual and emotional trauma she has experienced as a young girl/woman caused raging emotions inside. However, she keeps her cards close to her chest. All she has known is violence. She is angry. She becomes more angry as time goes on, making her a proud and bitter person. Her only joy comes in her two sons, Atreus and Thyestes. She hopes they will someday hold power and have control over their lives in a way she never could. When that is threatened, the only way she knows to solve the problem is through violence. She may not have the guts to kill Chrysippus herself, but she definitely is good at manipulating people to get her

way. That is why she manipulates Atreus against Chrysippus. Ensuring her sons' future power is what she lives for. Pelops putting Chrysippus on the throne is her worst nightmare.

The Oracle of Delphi, also known as Pythia, however, lives only to serve the gods. When she sees the gods' intentions through visions of the future, she must relay the message to whom it concerns. As a messenger of the gods, she holds a lot of power. For Thyestes in particular, she must persuade him to take action on the vision she had concerning his future son Aegisthus. Thyestes has tried to go against the gods' will before, so she warns him against doing so. She doesn't care for the people she sends messages to. The idea of a young girl getting raped by her father and having a child does not seem to bother her. It is the will of the gods.

Pythia is a mysterious creature. While she is human, she was given special powers by the gods to see visions of the future, which makes her more of a supernatural entity. She is cloaked in mist and mystery. Giving Pythia a distinct physicality and vocal quality will help portray this. Jordán refers to Pythia as serpent-like. Even her movements are less than human. She is not given an exact age in the script. She is worldly and has been in the position of priestess for awhile. She is not a young woman, but she is not old. The costume designer has chosen her look to have a Romani-like aesthetic rather than witch-like, which gives her a younger feel as well. She also wears a cloak that allows her to slip in and out of spaces unnoticed which gives her a magical feel.

The director seems to already have very specific ideas about how the character of Pythia should be portrayed. He sees her as serpent-like and mysterious. He has used

mysterious several times in his description of her. He is also encouraging choices that may make the character come across as “creepy.” The challenge for the actor is then to make choices that portray these qualities, without turning the character into a caricature. Particularly since the director wants representational acting. Her qualities must have truth to them without becoming a stage version of the Wicked Witch of the West. Oetken, who is playing Pythia does not typically play creepy or scary characters. It will make an interesting challenge to represent a character that goes against her normal type. However, Oetken will try to apply vocal and physical techniques she has been learning in graduate school to assist building of the character. It is hopeful that the actor will still have some creative agency in both characters of Pythia and Hippodamia working with Jordán’s very specific vision of what the characters should be.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter explores a historical and critical perspective of the play *Atreus*, written and directed by Yaurobeyo Jordán. The chapter will compare and contrast *Atreus* with the original myth, as well as Seneca's dramatic interpretation of the myth. It will also explore how women interpreted in Greek drama versus history. It will analyse how women's value in Greek times is based on her maternity, as well as how Greek drama both challenges and exacerbates misogynistic, patriarchal ideals. Lastly, the history of the Pythia of Delphi will be explored. The historical and critical perspective of these subjects will be codified through Oetken's construction of the characters of Hippodamia and Pythia.

*Atreus* was originally written by Jordán in his native language, Spanish, in 2016, translated as *Atreo*. The first act of the original play was performed at the National School Theatre Exhibition in Puerto Rico in 2016. The first and second acts were performed several times in Puerto Rico at schools and markets. The full play, including all four acts, premiered at the Inés María Mendoza school for general audiences on April 28, 2017 and performed through May 8 (Jordán, Protocol 4). The English performance ran in the U.S. at Minnesota State University, Mankato, on January 20-23, 2021 at 7:30 pm and January 23-24, 2021 at 2:00 pm.



## THE MYTH

*Atreus* is based off of the Greek myth of the House of Atreus. The play centers around the atrocities Atreus and Thyestes rain on each other, due to an apparent curse on their family. The curse originates two generations before the story told in the play. It begins with Atreus and Thyestes' grandfather, Tantalus. The story goes that in order to challenge Zeus and the gods' omniscience, he kills his own son, Pelops, and cooks him into a stew. He then serves the stew to the gods in order to see if they knew what he served them. The goddess Demeter, in grief over the recent loss of her daughter Persephone, is the only god to eat the stew. Zeus, in a rage, punishes Tantalus by tormenting him eternally, banishing him to Hades, where he would live in a state of constant thirst and hunger, just out of reach of a fruit tree and pond. This is where the root of the word "tantalize" comes from (Graves 25). Zeus then brings Pelops back to life (27).

Pelops is taken under the wing of Poseidon, who falls in love with him, making him his lover and giving him a special chariot (Graves 27). Then he takes over his father's throne (31). He hears of the King Oenomaus, who is known to hold chariot races, which his daughter's suitors must win in order to marry her. His daughter is Hippodamia, whose name means "horse tamer" (43). If the suitor won the race, then he would claim Hippodamia as his wife, and would kill Oenomaus. If Oenomaus won the race, the suitor would die. Oenomaus ensured that a suitor never won. The reason for preventing Hippodamia's marriage is unsure. Some versions of the story claim Oenomaus was in love with his own daughter and wanted her for himself. Others claim that an oracle had

told Oenamaus that his future son-in-law would one day kill him (32). Over a dozen young princes vying for Hippodamia's hand were killed through these chariot races.

Enter Pelops, with his god-granted chariot. To ensure his victory, Pelops persuades Oenmoas' chariot driver, Myrtilus, who is in love with Hippodamia, to betray his master by rigging Oenomaus' chariot to break down. In return, Pelops promised Myrtilus half of the monetary reward, plus a night of sleeping with Hippodamia (Graves 33). Just as Oenomaus is about to cheat the game, by throwing a spear at Pelops, the wheels fly off of his chariot. He loses the race. Either by Pelops' hand or his own, Oenomaus dies, and Pelops claims Hippodamia as his bride. (34) Pelops, Hippodamia, and Myrtilus ride off together. When they stop for the night, Myrtilus attempts to claim his reward, by trying to rape Hippodamia. Hippodamia, alarmed, tells Pelops, who, going back on his promise to Myrtilus, throws the man into the sea to drown. As he sinks to the depths, Myrtilus lays a curse upon Pelops and his household (34).

Pelops and Hippodamia return to Pisa, where he claims Oenomas' throne (Graves 35). The two settle in their life in Pisa, having many children, including Atreus and Thyestes. Somewhere along the line, Pelops has an extra-marital affair with a nymph, Astyoche, who bears him a son, Chrysippus. Chrysippus is passed off as the son of Pelops and Hippodamia (41). Hippodamia, in fear of Chrysippus becoming successor over her own, legitimate, children, persuades her sons, Atreus and Thyestes, to kill him by throwing him down a well. Another version of the story suggests that Chrysippus is taken by an older man who fell in love with him. Hippodamia sneaks into the man's

bedchambers and stabs Chrysippus with a sword, then flees Argolis. Either way, Hippodamia ends up committing suicide after she has fled (42).

### JORDÁN'S *ATREUS* VERSUS SENECA'S *THYESTES*

This is where Jordán's interpretation of the myth begins, with the children playing together, and Hippodamia observing, scheming on how she can rid her family of Chrysippus. Pelops sees her treating Chrysippus unequally and demands her to be a good mother to her step-child. Hippodamia seethes at this demand. Finding Atreus alone and vulnerable after being beaten by Pelops, she tells him about his father's plan to make Chrysippus king over him and Thyestes. This manipulation causes Atreus to tell Thyestes. The two boys end up beating and suffocating Chrysippus with a large stick.

The rest of the play follows the myth pretty exactly, with a couple exceptions. In Jordán's play, the character of Pelopia is younger than suggested in the myth. Making the incestual rape by Thyestes even more horrific, she is still a child, barely old enough to carry a child herself. Jordán also chose to have Pelopia commit suicide after bearing the baby Aegisthus. The baby is found by some soldiers and taken back to Atreus' household, which is how he becomes Atreus' son. The myth says that Pelopia was a priestess when Thyestes assaults her. She then marries Atreus, making the incestual web even more complicated and the identity of which brother conceived Aegisthus murky (Graves 46). In the myth, Aegisthus does end up killing Atreus at the urging of Thyestes, but is thought to only be a child of around seven (47). In Jordán's play, Thyestes does not

return to get his vengeance on Atreus until Aegisthus is a young man of approximately twenty.

These differences must have been for dramatic purposes. The suicide of Pelopia simplifies the plot line, focusing the story on Atreus and Thyestes. Making Aegisthus into a grown man makes Thyestes' manipulation of him more dramatic, as he has more agency in his decisions than that of a child. Albeit, a child of seven killing a grown man is dramatic in its own right. Perhaps it is easier for the audience to swallow a grown man murdering another, particularly after witness child rape, murder, and cannibalism already in the show.

There are few dramatic versions of the myth of Atreus and Thyestes to be found. There have been other versions, but most have been lost. Seneca's *Thyestes* seems to be one of the only full-versions left from antiquity (Seneca 43). Unlike Jordán's *Atreus*, which reads more like an epic and covers almost the entirety of Atreus and Thyestes' timelines, Seneca covers only one portion of adult-hood. It focuses on the revenge Atreus takes on Thyestes, the cannibal dinner being the critical peak of the play. In Seneca's play, we clearly see Atreus as the vengeful villain and Thyestes as the hero. Whereas, in Jordán's version, right and wrong aren't so apparent. Both men commit equally atrocious acts in the name of power, selfishness, revenge, and the gods. As the men sit contemplating past abuse on each other, one of the overarching themes of the play becomes apparent:

THYESTES. We both believe ourselves to be heroes but maybe we are  
villains.

ATREUS. There are no heroes or villains, only the consequences of our actions. (Act 3, Scene 4)

While Seneca's characters follow the Aristotelian rules of heroes and villains, Jordán's are seen through a more contemporary lens.

Seneca's drama opens with the Ghost of Tantalus being summoned back to Earth by a Fury. He complains about how he has been tortured for his past deeds and is wearisome to be back on Earth. He goes on to claim that his children and grandchildren have sinned, committing even more heinous crimes than he ever did (Seneca 45). The Fury bids Tantalus to curse his own house and force them to do more terrible things. Tantalus begs to take the curse upon himself and let there be peace among his ancestors. In weariness, he eventually gives in to the Fury when urged (45-49). A Greek Chorus of Argive elders, lament their wicked ruler, Atreus, and pray for peace among their ruling family:

Forbid the ever alternation  
Of crime with crime, spare us a new succession  
Of young blood baser than older generations  
Of children apter in sin than were their fathers.  
Grant that at last the impious brood descended  
From thirsting Tantalus may tire of outrage.  
Evil has gone too far - law's rule is powerless,  
Even the common bounds of sin exceeded. (50)

*Atreus* has a similar introduction with a ghost and supernatural beings egging on the characters. However, it is not an ancestor we find introducing the story, but the ghost of Atreus himself, lamenting his lack of control due to the gods and defending his actions before the audience even knows what he's done. It is a way of setting him up as a certain kind of flawed hero that the audience can recognize. Jordán has contemporized the story by not including a group of Chorus characters.

Instead, the character of Syneida, who is the only character not in the original myth, acts as a kind of Greek Chorus. She is there for all of the play, witnessing the acts of the two brothers throughout their lifetimes. "You have worked a lifetime for us," Atreus regards her at the top of Act three. She began the play as the nanny of the children and servant of the household. Syneida stays with Atreus into her old age. She acts as both comic relief, lightening the darkness of the story, and as the conscience of Atreus. She is horrified when she discovers Atreus has murdered the three young boys and served them to Thyestes. When she calls Atreus out on his actions, he resorts to her title as a servant instead of respecting her as a lifelong companion. "What would a servant know of these matters," he cries, "You are just a slave." She retorts that she is more than a slave, and in turn, calls him a monster and admonishes him for what he has done. "Only you can control yourself," she says, "Realize your mistakes. Do not obey your impulses and see how wrong your actions were. I beg you my King, seek peace for your whole family" (Act 3, Scene 4). So much like the Greek Chorus in Seneca's play, she deplores the actions of her king and begs him to create peace.

Unlike Greek dramas, where violence is kept offstage and then conveyed to the audience by a Chorus or Messenger character, there is some violence onstage in *Atreus*. Not only do we see the death of Chrysipuss at the hands of his step-brothers at the very beginning of the play, but we see the death of Atreus when Aegisthus and Thyestes kill him. However, other atrocities, such as the rape of Pelopia and the killing of the three children, are not seen on stage, but implied through theatricality. This is true as well of the suicides of the three women, Hippodamia, Pelopia, and Aerope. While in Seneca's play, no blood is spilled on stage, the descriptions of the killings are graphic. A whole scene is dedicated to the Messenger telling the Greek Chorus in detail exactly how the three young princes were murdered, how cold-hearted Atreus was in the execution and how he delighted in the process (Seneca 73-81). The worst of the gore that is seen is when Atreus reveals the severed heads of the children to Thyestes, showing that he has consumed his sons in the feast (89).

Another difference between the two plays is that Jordán's characters' actions seem to drive them to madness, not just cold-blooded revenge. Whereas Seneca ends his play with Thyestes offering his revenge up to the gods and walking away to try and live in peace, Jordán's Thyestes is slowly driven mad by revenge and paranoia. At the end of the play, his maniacal laughter rings through the space as he manipulates Aegisthus into killing Atreus. Additionally, while Atreus struggles to control his impulses in Jordán's play, the Atreus of Seneca's play schemes and plots in his palace, everything carefully laid out before him.

While both plays address that each man has a choice in his actions, there is also the element of the characters being controlled by supernatural forces. While it is not explicitly written in the script, Jordán's staging of the play shows from the very beginning that the Greek gods have control of the characters and the world. The prologue has the cast members, masked as the gods, surrounding Atreus as he introduces his plight to the audience. As the scene shifts into the first act of the play, it is those god-characters who move all of the set pieces, symbolizing how they control what happens in the play. There is only one god who is seen as a speaking character in the play. Hermes interjects on Atreus' life after Thyestes tricks him out of the throne. The gods then intervene in order to help Atreus. This favor of the gods Atreus seems blessed with is just one more thing that irritates Thyestes. However, he too is swayed by the gods, when the Oracle of Delphi comes to him in Act three, Scene five. The Pythia, who is said to be a mouthpiece of Apollo, gives him her premonition of Atreus' death. Her vision prompts Thyestes to make the horrible decision to rape Pelopia, so that their son, Aegisthus, may kill Atreus. The Pythia makes it clear that since he scoffed the gods in the past, he has no other choice, if he wants revenge on Atreus.

The theme of the gods' influence is less direct in *Thyestes*. However, the supernatural Fury who calls Tantalus back from Hades and the curse that hangs over the household, shows an outside influence on the men. The Greek Chorus is constantly praying to the gods to bring peace to their land and end the ceaseless violence caused by the House of Atreus.



While the themes in both dramas may be similar, Jordán considers the play to be different from traditional Greek tragedy in both style and structure. Unlike the Aristotelian five act structure, *Atreus* is broken up into four acts. Each act jumps forward by ten to twenty years, breaking the laws of unity of time. Stylistically, the play has a more contemporary feel, while holding true to the darkness and drama of the Greek tragedy. The language is formal, reminding one of Greek heightened language, but lacks the poetry. It is contemporary dialogue, often with more than two characters in a scene, and very few long monologues. (Seneca's only having two characters speaking per scene as per the Greek drama of the time period.) Jordán considers his play's style and structure closer to that of Euripides than of his contemporaries Sophocles or Aeschylus (Jordán, Protocol 18). Overall, Jordán captures the grit and horror of the myth and of Seneca's *Thyestes*, while molding the content with a contemporary structure. *Atreus* very much has flavour of a Greek Tragedy, but is attempting to be more friendly to modern audiences.

#### PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN GREEK MYTH AND DRAMA

The story of the House of Atreus does not have a very strong female presence. While there are women important to the plot line, they are not the main characters or the driving forces of the play. Essentially, the story is about Atreus and Thyestes and their feud. The characters of Aerope, Atreus' wife who was seduced by Thyestes, and that of Pelopia, Thyestes daughter, who he raped, are selfishly used and thrown aside by the men. Synedia, while the constant observer and active conscience for Atreus, does not have any agency over her surroundings. The characters of Hippodamia and the Pythia are

arguably the only women in the play who have any power to make a difference in this world.

Both women have the advantage over the other few women characters by having a higher station in life. Hippodamia is a queen. The Pythia is a priestess of Apollo. However, Hippodamia still does not have much control of her own life. She does not get to make any political decisions, nor does she get to make many decisions in her own household. She must always answer to her husband, King Pelops. This is why she feels she cannot take direct action in ensuring that her biological sons inherit the throne. This is why she chooses to manipulate her sons to do the dirty work for her. Pythia, as a priestess, has much power. But, even as an agent of Apollo, she is still beholden to a male figure-head.

The question becomes, did any women in ancient Greece have power? Are how they are portrayed in myth and drama accurate to historical life? Scholars like Ken Dowden, who have studied women in antiquity and literature, suggest it is inadvisable to interpret myth as truth. Dowden warns of over-generalizing information, “Any material that looks so non-historical misleads us into thinking that it is somehow unaffected by exact historical circumstance, that it is supra-historical...It is possible therefore to see in Greek mythology certain recurrent and characteristic views” (qtd in Zajko 394). Meaning that we cannot take myth as exact history, but we can extrapolate general thoughts and ideas about the time by comparing them with primary sources, like written speeches of the time (394).

Mary Lefkowitz suggests in her book *Women in Greek Myth*, that we shouldn't try to "decode" myth through "modern methodology." The stories were invented in the past about people of the past. She argues that we should not take myth as the truth of the everyday life of these people. The characters in Greek myth are heroes and heroines, not everyday people (xviii). Like Hippodamia, or Pythia, the women in these stories are usually those of royal households or special positions of power (Wilmer xv). She also suggests that we don't really know what females of the time were thinking. There were next to no female writers (that we know of). Therefore our knowledge of the time period and the perspective from which most myth and drama are written, are that of men (Lefkowitz 42).

So how were women portrayed in Greek myth and drama? The most apparent attribute shared by women in Greek myth is maternity. Nearly all women mentioned in these stories are of marriageable or child-bearing age. Elderly women and female children are rarely characters (Lefkowitz 42). Typically, women were kept close to home, particularly if they were still a virgin. Women did not wander outside of the home without a companion, usually a male, to protect them from being ravaged, therefore "ruined" (110). While a female was allowed to own property at the time, they didn't truly have control over it. Nor were they allowed to be involved in any kind of politics (146). A woman was passed down from man to man as property as well. There was no such thing as an independent woman. If a married woman's husband died, she was forced to marry the closest male relative. Likewise, if a man died and left behind a daughter, she would be given to her brother, cousin, or uncle (129).

Some scholars even say that some Greek dramas equate marriage to slavery. In *Rebel Women*, Stephen Wilmer uses *Trojan Women* to exemplify this. He equates hunting to marriage in Aeschylus's *The Suppliants*, wherein a group of women do not marry a certain group of men and try to escape. The men come after them, and they must seek shelter in a foreign city (xix). Marriage is the only option for women if they are not a priestess. But it does not always mean a happy life, in Greek drama. The married women in *Atreus* certainly do not live happily-ever-after. Both Aerope and Hippodamia commit suicide.

The women who were portrayed in myth usually had a particular quality that made her honorable and worth telling a story about. They were chosen by men to be brides because they were exceedingly beautiful, brave, or clever. The same can be said of female deities who give birth to gods or important male figures (Lefkowitz 51). While a good woman of the time is thought to be more passive, and a man more active, the women in the stories who do take action, are exceptional (Lefkowitz xv, Wilmer xiv). Examples of this would be Electra, plotting revenge against her mother, or Antigone rebelling against Creon's decree not to bury the bodies of those who are enemies of the state. While myth and drama acknowledge women's capability for intelligence, women are still not in control of their lives outside serving a man. If she does take action against a man, she is clearly punished for it (Lefkowitz 139). Using Antigone as the example, she fights for what she believes in, but dies in the end anyway. Women's stories and voices may be represented in Greek myth, but it is under the oppression of men.

Women's main role in Greek antiquity is that of motherhood. This is why women of marrying age are almost exclusively represented in myth and drama. Men cannot continue their legacy without a woman to birth the sons who will keep the bloodline going. If a woman does leave the home and manage to rebel somehow against patriarchal oppression, it is usually in favor of safeguarding their household, or helping a man (Lefkowitz 143-44). If a woman somehow does something to hurt her family, she is portrayed as evil or is somehow punished for it. The first scene of *Atreus* fits this idea well, as Hippodamia does not want to act as mother to one that is not of her blood, Chrysipuss. Pelops demands that she "be a good mother, and raise all your children well," emphasizing that he wants to hear no more retorts from Hippodamia, walking away from her (Act 1, Scene 1). He also stresses that he is the one who makes the decisions. Hippodamia does not get a say in matters of the throne.

Women are considered more passionate than men. Passion according to this time period is equal to loss of reason and judgement (Lefkowitz 169). This is one way men thought women inferior to men. Reason and intelligence were considered good qualities, feeling and passion, less so. Aristotle even believed that women in poetry should not be given "manly qualities" such as cleverness: "Goodness is possible in every type of personage, even in a woman or a slave, though the one is perhaps an inferior, and the other a wholly worthless being...It is not appropriate in a female Character to be manly, or clever" (Wilmer xiii). This passion was the downfall of several men in Greek myth. Even the gods and goddesses were subject to this judgement. Goddesses who were

celibate were considered to be more trustworthy because they didn't have the power to persuade men with their sexuality and "passions" (Leftkowitz 180).

This loss of temptation is why the Oracles of Delphi were only chosen among women who could no longer bear children. Originally, the temple only chose young virgins to be priestesses. After one priestess was raped by Echekratres, they changed the rule to only allow older women. And no man would be tempted to rape a woman beyond the age of marriage and childbirth. Ironically, the older women still wore the robes of a virginal priestess, even if they had children, in order to show their marriage to Apollo (Connelly 44). This lack of sexuality or passion is also why the women of Apollo were allowed to walk on their own, unlike a married woman (Lefkowitz 121). While typically a man would come to the temple in Delphi to consult with a priestess, it is not totally un-thinkable that the Pythia would show up, on her own, to Thyestes' house, as she does in the play. Any other woman, such as Aerope, would not be allowed on her own. In fact, the one time we see her alone in the play, she is seduced by Thyestes, which eventually leads to her banishment and suicide. Again, the women who go for what they want (in this case Aerope wants Thyestes, sexually), she is punished for it.

There is also a double-standard in marriage when it comes to faithfulness. If a woman is unfaithful to her husband, she is punished or painted as dishonorable in the story (Lefkowitz 131). The whole system of family comes crashing down. Whereas, a man is allowed to have an extramarital affair, as long as he acknowledges that his wife is still his wife (Lefkowitz 130). Whereas men see no consequences to their actions, women do:

Marriage is violated in the myths by both sexes, but with very different consequences. Violations by men, though harmful to women, do not in themselves cause the collapse of order. But their actions prompt women in the myths to act, and when that happens, the female is released and marriage is undone as a structure of order. There ensues the downfall of the household, and, if the man is a king or leader, his city plunges into chaos (qtd. in Zajko 396).

An example of this is seen in *Atreus* with the character of Hippodamia. While Pelops suffers no tragedy, immediately, from his affair with a nymph, Hippodamia's world is turned upside down by the presence of his bastard son, Chrysipus. The threat of his existence tears her up inside, eventually driving her to convince her own sons to murder, therefore causing a chaotic chain of events in the family and the kingdom. The young princes are banished from the kingdom, leaving Pelops without an heir to the throne. Hippodamia kills herself over the loss of her children. Atreus and Thyestes are pitted against each other for the throne of Mycenae, and then follows more tragedy.

Women's stories are told in Greek myth and drama, but they are told through the mouths of men. We cannot interpret myth as historical reality, particularly when it comes to female storylines. This is because women who are represented in drama and myth are considered extraordinary, not typical everyday women. One thing that is certain, despite the historical misogyny that may motivate these women to act upon their passionate feelings, they are fighting for their truth, despite what men tell them. Antigone risks all to

follow her moral compass. Electra risks all for revenge on her mother. Hippodamia risks all for the love of her children.

### PYTHIA PRIESTESSES

The Oracle of Delphi, also known as the Pythia, were among the women of power during this time period. Unlike most priestesses of other gods and goddesses, these women were chosen among peasant women, not rich or noble class (Connelly 73). The women acted as the mouthpieces of Apollo, god of sun and light, as well as of prophecy (Hudgens 90). Kings and peasants alike traveled to the mountain on which the Temple of Delphi stood for around 1,200 years, until around 4 A.D., when it is said the sacred spring stilled and the Pythia no longer prophesied (Connelly 81, Hudgens 89).

The mountain on which the temple was built was said to be built over a small chasm. A vaporous steam rose from within the chasm with a hissing noise. The hissing is said to be that of Python, a serpent who used to rule over Delphi and its oracle. Apollo slew Python, and the body of the snake emits the mist. Apollo then took control of the Delphic oracles. (Hudgens 97-98). From this myth is where the name of Pythia was derived.

The Pythia were considered very important. Their prophecies were taken very seriously. Giulia Sissa, a scholar, says that since the Pythia sits on a tripod over a chasm with vapors coming out, the vapors go up into the vagina and mouth. Vagina and mouth were considered “symbolically equivalent” in Greek culture at that time, according to Sissa. Therefore, when the oracle speaks a prophecy, it is a metaphor for giving birth to



Apollo's thoughts (Maurizio 71). The prophecies were highly influential in the political decisions made during the time, affecting how the Greek state was formed. Ancient historian, Herodotus, once wrote of the impact Pythia had, using the example of Knidos. The Knidians were digging a trench along the isthmus into the city in an attempt to stop Harpagos from attacking. The oracle was consulted. She told them to stop digging the trench. So they did. Knidos was left defenseless, and Harpagos took over the city (Connelly 219). The Knidians essentially let themselves be dominated over the word of a Delphic oracle.

Perhaps this is why Thyestes takes the horrific actions he does in *Atreus*. He shows great shock and trepidation when Pythia tells him he must sleep with his young daughter to get revenge on Atreus. He even goes as far as to question her. Despite this, he completes the deed. Which thing weighed more heavily on him, the prophecy of the oracle, or his own need for revenge, is debatable.

In *Atreus*, the Pythia character finds Thyestes in Tiryns to tell him of her vision. In reality, those seeking advice from an oracle would have to travel to the temple. Since Delphi is approximately 150 miles from Tiryns, it is unlikely a Pythia would travel such a great distance, on her own. The priestesses only worked around nine months of the year. The temple was closed during the winter months (Connelly 73). The priestesses did not give prophecies every day of the month either. They only prophesied on the seventh day of the new moon, which calculates to working only about nine days a year. Sometimes impatient men would try to force the Pythia to give prophecies on the wrong days. The

Pythia usually refused. If the man was persistent, sometimes the Pythia would give a premonition, but it would not always be what the men wanted to hear (74).

There was a ritual that both the priestess and those seeking advice would complete on these special days when they were working. The water from the stream Katossis, which ran near the temple, was said to have special powers. Before sharing any visions, the oracle would drink from the stream (Connelly 76). The inquirer would be required to bathe in holy water, additionally giving an offering of a cake of barley or honey meal. After paying a fee, they would be taken into a waiting area until the priestess was ready for them. Surprisingly, goats were important to this ritual as well. A goat would be sacrificed at the beginning of each day. The priest would watch the behavior of the goat closely, and if the animal shook enough, Apollo approved of the sacrifice. The one seeking advice would ask their question orally or it would be written on a tablet and given to the Pythia (79). Pythia would also burn barley or laurel leaves for libations. Sitting on a tripod over a crack in the ground, the Pythia would adorn a crown of bay leaf and hold a sprig of bay leaf in her hand while prophesying (77). She would inhale the vapors coming from the cracks in the earth and soon would enter a trance. When Apollo spoke through her, it would be in prose or, sometimes, hexameter verse (79).

There are some who have tried to challenge the agency of the priestesses by claiming that the words that came out of the oracle were all gibberish. A male priest would then translate her words into something more intelligible, or poetic (thus the hexameter verse). Modern historians have pushed back on this, proving the women of Delphi had full agency over their prophecies (Connelly 73). There has been no proof

found that male priests were inside the temple “translating” for the women. The Pythia had full control of the happenings in the Temple and it was Apollo who was fully possessing and talking through them (Maurizio 86). After reading of women in Greek myth being completely controlled by men and male gods, it is refreshing to imagine these women distributing such important information and having such an impact on the world.

Was it truly Apollo speaking through these women? And what’s with these “vapors” the women are breathing in? Of course, Greek myth explains it as the last breath of the Python creature. Scientists have another explanation. French scientists set out in 1892 to find the crack in the ground over which the Pythia would sit on her tripod. Despite years and years of excavating that followed, no fissure or fault lines were found. It wasn’t until 1981 when geologist Jelle Zeilinga de Boer discovered a fault line, working on a project for the government. He realized it went under the site of the old temple, and, on a whim, remembered the stories of Plutarch about the vapors the priestesses used to inhale. It wasn’t until 1998 that de Boer and archeologist John Hale finally were able to prove that there were chemical substances in the fissure called ethylene. These gases were known hallucinogens. Seismic activity in ancient Greece is probably the cause of the fumes that were expelled from the rocks and breathed in by the oracles (Broad).

Whether Apollo was truly speaking for these women, or they were simply high on fumes, they had an incredible influence on politics, culture, and war in ancient Greece. Despite their peasant roots, they were of the few privileged women of their time period, who held power and agency.

Women in ancient Greece, whether in myth or real life, had very little control over their lives. Their main role was to please men, give birth to babies and continue humanity. While continuing humanity is no easy feat, it is hard for modern feminists to grasp such a 2D representation of women. It is always the job of the actor in a drama to create as truthful and layered a character as possible on stage. How does one do this when a character has a one-track mind? We continue to try and dig for the complexities. The small motivations that a modern actress can grab onto, she tries to mold into a human being with a complex human heart. She is uplifted by the actions the women do manage to take in order to overcome patriarchal oppression. She is inspired by their un-ending persistence.

## CHAPTER III

## JOURNAL

Monday, October 26, 2020

Tonight was the first night of rehearsal for *Atreus*. The director and playwright, Yauroyebo Jordán, gave a dramaturgical presentation to the cast. The play is his own telling of the Greek story of Atreus and Thyestes. The play was first produced in Puerto Rico, but this will be its premier on the mainland U.S. Originally written in Spanish, this is also a translation of the play. This will be an interesting opportunity to work with a playwright on an original work. While I've done some devised work and a staged reading of a new play, I have yet to work on a fully-mounted new play, particularly one where the playwright is so heavily involved as the director as well. Working with a translation as well will be interesting.

The language is supposed to be contemporary but formal. Jordán has admitted his translation into English is not as smooth as the original language, the rhythms are different. We may get the opportunity to work with him here and there to adjust the language as needed. I am glad he is open to input about it. It's a very good translation. However, here and there words are switched around in a way that is correct grammatically but doesn't feel as natural rolling off the tongue for an native English speaker. I also know he wants the language to feel contemporary. To me, the formality of the language makes it sound very much like a classic Greek tragedy. I wonder how much

he is willing to loosen up some of his thoughts on things like no contractions. I think he is right that there shouldn't be any slang or modern phrases like we use today, in order to keep it timeless. However, I wonder if the occasional softening of some of the lines would make it feel a little less "stiff," as sometimes translations of ancient Greek text can come off.

I am curious if he workshopped the text at all here in the U.S. after he translated it. He did say he was open to changing text but that he didn't want to change too much so that we can start memorizing lines. A workshop beforehand would have helped him find a lot of little things like, "Oh the language here is a little off," or "this part is a little slow," etc. I'm just curious. When I was attending Long Island University, before I came to Minnesota State, Mankato, I took a New Play development class, where we studied working with new plays. We were able to workshop a play with the playwright and do a public staged reading on campus. It was a valuable experience that was beneficial for both playwright and actors participating. I wonder if this process will be approached similarly. Or perhaps this is already a very polished copy of the work and it will be pretty straight forward after all. I don't know. I am merely musing about possibilities since I have not worked a lot on new plays.

I play two different characters in the text. The play takes place over the span of about forty years. In the first act I play Hippodamia, the mother of Atreus and Thyestes. Hippodamia seems to be a jealous and spiteful woman, a woman who has been oppressed and beaten down for so long, that like an abused dog, lashes out instead of hiding away. She manipulates Atreus into thinking his half-brother, Chrysippus, is going to take away

his chance at becoming king. She wants her blood on the throne, desperately, not the bastard child of her cheating husband.

The other character I play is Pythia, the Oracle of Delphi. In the third act, she is the one who relays a message from the gods to Thyestes. She tells him that the only way he can get revenge on Atreus is if Thyestes sleeps with his own daughter. The son born of Thyestes and his daughter will be the one to kill Atreus.

I am starting to think of ways to make the two women very different characters. I see Hippodamia as being extremely proud, upright, and royal. Jordán described Pythia as mysterious, surrounded by mist. “Think a serpent,” he said. How can I portray this serpentine nature physically and in my voice? To make her almost otherworldly. It will be an interesting challenge to really differentiate the two characters.

There is a lot of opportunity for research in both of these characters that may help how I shape each of them. Neither of them have long periods of time onstage, but their impact on the storyline is huge.

Thursday, October 29, 2020

Tonight we blocked the first act of the show. My character Hippodamia is onstage every scene in this act. It is my biggest chunk of acting in the show. The director, Jordán, has very specific ideas of what he wants out of every movement the actors makes. His blocking instructions are quite detailed for initial blocking. I am not sure how much of these little things he expects us to remember for next time. An example of this would be, on a specific line you look away from your scene partner, then on this next line you look

back at him. He also gave us several detailed character notes, which surprised me for an initial blocking rehearsal. I have worked with directors who do this before. It's not my preference. It also feels creatively limiting to be told how to do everything. I am hoping we will be able to compromise.

The process that works best for me is when blocking starts out simple and organic then as we get to know the play and characters better, specify from there. I start by knowing I walk stage right to stage left and figure out the motivation later. Same with character work. I tend to like to get the basics of lines and blocking down before I go too far into character work. Of course, character work is always in the back of the mind throughout this. The way I learn, I need to break things down and take them one step at a time, master it, then add more layers. That is just the way my brain works. If too many directions are given to me at once I tend to feel overwhelmed trying to remember and figure out every last detail on the spot.

It will be a challenge to work with a process that is the opposite of my own. However, in theatre, and in life, one always works with someone who doesn't learn or process the same as you. I will need to be open minded and flexible both with him and myself. For myself, I will need to accept that I will not remember all the little details, and I probably won't be able to portray my characters the exact way the director wants. As long as I can incorporate as many of both of our ideas of the character and work together with some give and take, I will be happy.



Monday, November 2, 2020

It was a short and sweet rehearsal today. We focused on Act three, which is largely focused on Thyestes' storyline and his plotting revenge on Atreus. My character, the Oracle of Delphi, informs him that he must sleep with his young daughter. The child born of their union will be the one who eventually kills Atreus and fulfills Thyestes' revenge on him. I am still trying to piece out what Pythia is as an oracle. From what Jordán has explained, she is a mouth piece for the gods. She must have some kind of power if she can see the future. Jordán has described her as mysterious and serpent-like. I need to figure out how that fits in my body and voice. I also need to make her different from Hippodamia so that the two characters are not at all alike.

We are supposed to be off-book this week. Once I am more off book I feel I can start playing with these options a bit more. Some research into oracles and my specific character of Pythia will probably help inform some future choices I make as well.

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

There were several good discoveries I made today during rehearsal. The largest one was figuring out the power struggle between Hippodamia and Pelops, her husband. In the first scene, Jordán suggested that Hippodamia is scared of Pelops. However, her dialogue seemed strong and almost sassy. Overall, I see her as a very proud character. But Hippodamia and Pelops are not equals. He is king and rules over her. The men in this time also have more power than women. She would not dare talk back to him unless she felt that she had some kind of advantage or leverage over him. By the second scene, she

is much stronger, challenging him in a way that is quite brave, considering he could have her killed for speaking to him the way she does. I could not figure out how she gets from being scared of him to being so blatantly confrontational. As we were working through the monologue Hippodamia has at the end of the first scene, we came to the conclusion that this is where she gains power.

In the monologue she addresses the gods, asking them why she is put in this situation. The situation, being the wife of a man who cheated on her and had a son with another woman. Not only that, but this bastard son threatens her childrens' chances to inherit the throne. She vows that Chryssipus, the bastard son, will never sit on the throne if she has anything to do with it. She doesn't know how it will happen, but she basically promises to end his life. This vow and having a plan gives her the strength and confidence to confront Pelops in the next scene. She believes she now has control of the situation. Once she manipulates Atreus into killing Chryssipus, she believes she has succeeded but doesn't take Pelops' anger and hurt into account. He banishes the very sons she was trying to lift up and realizes he will probably hurt her now. I guess that's why it is found out later that she commits suicide. I am sure she wanted to end her life on her own terms instead of letting him torture her because of what she did. The monologue is the gateway into her power, which she loses immediately a few scenes later.

Monday, November 9, 2020

This evening I was working Act three, Scene five off-book. In this scene I am playing the character of Pythia. The first couple rehearsals, Jordán referred to the

character as “serpent-like,” “mysterious,” “surrounded in mist.” She has a very defined look and sound in the director’s eye. I am trying to interpret what that is without making the character become cartoon-like.

I began with exploring my physicalization of the character. Since he described her as like a snake, I tried keeping my body in an “S” shape and moving as slinky as possible, without coming off as “sexy.” I don’t think Pythia is that quality. I also experimented with moving my head in a snake-like manner. I felt successful in this. It made my character feel less than ordinary and gave her a sort of strangeness that might disturb Thyestes.

Vocally, I was trying a lighter, breathy voice to contrast that of Hippodamia. I was also trying a slower, more direct cadence and punching the “s” to draw out the snake sound a bit. I was hoping it would come off as “mysterious” that Jordán was going for, but after the first run he said it seemed “cute” more than mysterious. He kept asking if I could be more “creepy.” I asked him what specific vocal qualities he was thinking of, because there are many versions of “creepy” can be. He encouraged me to think witch-like. This description had me a little worried because I am already trying to avoid “cartoon-like” qualities in Pythia.

Then he suggested trying a vocal quality with some vocal fry in it to give it more of a rasping sound. I thought this was a good idea, but I was hesitant about how to apply it. Again, I didn’t want to sound like the wicked witch. I know vocal fry and raspy qualities can be hard on the voice if overused or applied too harshly. So, the next time I tried it, I lowered my pitch so it was less girlish and attempted to throw in a few raspy

sounds here and there. It didn't end up working very well. I only found a few places to use it and my hesitation made the overall effect too small to make a real difference.

Jordán encouraged me after rehearsal to make big choices to start and to scale back later.

He is right. I tell this to my students in my beginning acting class all the time, yet I wasn't following my own advice. I will have to do some work on my own outside of rehearsal to play with the vocal qualities more. If I have a few options that I've practiced then I can feel more confident to play with them in rehearsals. I can find more specific places to use the rasp so that I don't hurt my voice in the process.

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Tonight was a perfect example of how amazing, yet frustrating it is, that we are doing theatre in the middle of a pandemic. With COVID-19 ramping up all around us now that the weather is getting colder, people are either getting sick, or going into quarantine from exposure to the virus. I am in a tricky spot. I had COVID-19 mid-September. I had a moderately aggressive case. I was not hospitalized, but it hit me hard and took me a long time to recover. In some ways I still am. I lost a lot of strength, which I am working to rebuild, and I have a lingering dry cough. It's been less than 90 days since I tested positive so theoretically I should still have decent immunity. Although there is still much unknown about the disease, we know people can get it again. However, tests concerning how long people are immune have had mixed results. Some say you are immune for 90 days. Some say five to six months. The nurse from Mayo Clinic who

released me from isolation said their antibody tests showed too mixed results to say for sure and still recommended taking all the normal precautions.

Do I still have immunity? I woke up today with a drippy nose, slightly sore throat and fatigue. Not terrible. During a normal year, I would just say I'm catching a cold and still go to school and rehearsal despite it all. We love to "power through" sickness here in America. We just can't do that with COVID-19. I learned this the hard way when I tried to power through my first symptoms when I got sick back in September. Last weekend I babysat my friends' young girl, who tested positive for COVID-19 yesterday. Last week, when I was exposed to one of my students who tested positive, I was told by faculty that I had immunity since I was sick within the last 90 days, so I didn't need to quarantine or get tested. I thought the same after I found out about being exposed to the little one, but now I have cold symptoms. I feel so paranoid about possibly having it again. Maybe it is an immune response to being exposed? Or maybe I just simply have a small cold.

My paranoia about spreading more sickness to my peers made me decide to just stay home today and monitor my symptoms. I attended class and rehearsal virtually over Zoom. The friend I babysat for is in the cast of *Atreus*. The lead actor babysat his daughter the same night I had babysat her earlier in the day. All of us are quarantining, so we all attended rehearsals online. There were three actors in the actual rehearsal space. Three of the six actors called tonight were online. The ones in the space still did their blocking and those of us on Zoom tried to interpret our lines the best we could vocally. It was pretty obvious none of us were excited about not being at rehearsal in person. Jordán tried to give us a few notes, but there is not much you can talk about when you aren't in

the same room as the person. He mostly focused on emotional energy and vocal choices, which makes sense.

I am happy we are still doing live theatre and attempting to do it in a safe way. I am amazed we've gone this long without the whole department shutting down. We are so close to Thanksgiving break. The university is having the college go completely online the rest of the semester in order to prevent the spread of COVID after students return from traveling on the holiday. I hope we can hold out these next two weeks. It would be an amazing feat. Most of all, I want us to get through this semester with everyone as healthy, and sane as possible.

Friday, November 13, 2020

I tried a voice using vocal fry tonight and he liked it! That was faster than I thought. However, when I get back into the space, using projection, we'll have to see how my voice takes it. I'll also need to put it together with my physical movements.

Tonight, I was still on Zoom. I still have mild symptoms but a day of rest did help. I was able to get another COVID-19 test today. Hopefully tomorrow I will have the result of that.

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Thank goodness, my COVID test came back negative. My immune system did its job after all. I have been back in person at rehearsal last night and tonight. We have

moved into the performance space in the Andreas Theatre. It is a much bigger space than the studio classroom we have been rehearsing in. It was a little jarring. I have to remember to project more and use the whole space. Tonight especially it threw me off because of the voice I do for Pythia. I have to figure out how to project in that space with the fry quality of voice Jordán wants for the character. I think vocal warm ups will be important to do before performing this character each night so as not to hurt myself. Reminding myself to have good breath support and to generally relax the vocal cords will help. Because Pythia is also snake-like, perhaps the slinky physicality will help the voice to slink more? I was not as embodied in the physicality tonight because the space threw me off a bit. Overall, I was just pretty unfocused tonight.

We have also been working out transitions for scene changes, who takes what set piece in and out of the space when. This process has been a little tedious. There are a lot of actors, and none of the scene changes were planned out before rehearsal started so it was all being figured out on the spot. I am not sure if this was a choice on Jordán's part, or if it was because our stage manager, Reina Beisell, doesn't know how to choreograph scenery movement since she is a beginner stage manager. Either way, it is a reminder to me that we are in an educational environment, not a professional one. Everyone is learning what process works best for them, etc.

With COVID-19 cases at an all-time high here in Minnesota and Thanksgiving holiday right around the corner, Minnesota's governor, Tim Walz is placing further restrictions on events, businesses and social gatherings in order to help stop the spread. New restrictions go in place on Friday. We are unsure how this will affect our classes and

rehearsals for the next week until Thanksgiving break. The university is encouraging as many classes as possible to go online as soon as possible, but there have been no limits put on sports or theatre events immediately. The faculty is still deciding how best to approach this. *Atreus* and *Planet Protectors* (the touring children's show I wrote and am directing) are still in rehearsal. *Angel Street* opened tonight and is supposed to run through Sunday. I think they will, at the very least, be able to perform through Friday when the new restrictions are supposed to go into place. I hope they can finish Saturday and Sunday, but we will see what happens. I hope we can have the last few rehearsals in person that we need for *Atreus* and *Planet Protectors*. It has been very difficult to put these shows together with limited rehearsal time and cast and crew members constantly being quarantined.

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Due to Governor Walz's new restrictions and the university bumping the COVID-19 status up to "orange," tonight will be our last rehearsal until January for *Atreus*. This is extremely nerve-racking since we are supposed to go straight into tech for *Atreus* when we come back from winter break. Tonight was our first run through. It disturbs me that this will be our only run through before we start adding tech elements. I do not feel like we are anywhere near where we need to be acting-wise. The last few rehearsals have been focused on scene shifts and not so much on acting.

We also found out that we now are all going to be understudies for another role in the play. I was hoping Jordán would give me a smaller role to understudy so that I can



focus on my thesis roles. However, he assigned me the next biggest female role in the show, which is Atreus's wife, Aerope. Now over winter break I will have to memorize her part. Bella Fox, who plays Aerope, was not at rehearsal in person. She'd been exposed to someone with COVID so she has been attending virtually. So, I was not able to write down her blocking. I'll have to either get it from her somehow virtually, or I will have to get together with Jordán or Beisell before we come back to rehearsal in January.

Tonight I tried to focus on the physicality of Pythia. Last time I did not fully engage with the body because my brain was thrown off by being in the new space. I think I found a good place in my body for Pythia to live. I really focused on the snake-like aspects, keeping my body in an S-curve, moving my head, and isolating a circular motion in my waist and shoulders. I think I found a good place where these things happen but aren't over-the-top. Since I was focusing so much on the body I did lose some of the fry vocal quality. I'll have to work over the break on doing both at the same time. I also need to figure out a warm up or trigger that can help me get into Pythia, since she is more difficult to embody than Hippodamia.

Monday, January 11, 2021

It's the first rehearsal returning from break. Considering we have not rehearsed in a month and a half and the last rehearsal we had only had half the cast in the space, it went fine. We got started late, so we didn't make it through the entire show. Tomorrow night, Jordán has promised we will get going right away and not stop so that we get through the whole show. The biggest thing that continues to make things messy is scene

changes. There was some confusion about who does what since not everyone was there in person last time. Now that we are all present at rehearsal, it should clear itself up in the next couple rehearsals.

The character of Hippodamia went pretty well. I felt like she lived in a good place in my voice and body. I lost a little bit of the connection with my scene partners. I think this is mostly because of the circumstances of the rehearsal. Tomorrow night I will try to focus on eye connection, tactics, and listening a little more. Connecting with the eyes, I have found to be so important while acting with a COVID face covering. I think I can find a little more power in her too. She didn't quite feel as emotionally strong as she could have.

Pythia was interesting. The vocals and body went better than expected. I didn't do as much work over the break exploring her voice as I intended to so it still doesn't feel completely comfortable yet. But it's getting there. I cannot seem to figure out what is the correct blocking for the scene this character in. One time I'm wandering too much. The next I'm standing still too much. Tonight I was sitting for an inordinate amount of time. I will have to check in with the stage manager before tomorrow's rehearsal.

I spent a lot of time tonight studying Bella Fox, whose role of Aerope I am understudying. She wasn't at the last rehearsal in person, so I didn't get to write down her blocking. Tonight I made sure to watch her and write down what she does. I also just paid attention to her character more to see what the arc looked like from the stage. It's hard to get a sense of her character just by reading it. I made note of certain tactics she used that were successful and moments I would do differently. Fox plays the character of Aerope,

very sweet and ingenue-like. I don't think the character is that sweet. I think she has a little more sass and intelligence beneath the surface. She is by no means brassy, but I think she is not so tragic. It was good to get a foundation of blocking set for the character and have a little time to think about character choices for the understudy role. Tomorrow, however, I will need to refocus on putting all my energies into my regular roles.

One of the benefits of tonight's rehearsal was that since I was focusing on understudy stuff, I was watching the whole play when I wasn't on stage. I hadn't had a chance to do that yet. It was nice to get a better feeling of the story as a whole and brought a little more life and understanding to what motivates each individual character in a scene. A full story is starting to emerge from all the segments I saw in earlier rehearsals. As we get better at remembering lines and scene changes and begin to add more tech elements in each night, a play will solidify itself.

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

No really huge discoveries made tonight, character-wise. I did clean up Pythia's blocking. I didn't quite reach my goal about making connections with the other characters. I think I got a little caught up in the pacing of the show. It was really nice to finally get through the whole show and see it to the end. It is complete. The whole show is pretty much there, we just need to keep smoothing out all the little details and working parts.

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

It was, thankfully, a short night of rehearsal tonight. We only focused on Act three and four, which was wise on the part of Jordán. Those couple acts needed a little more work. We have had much more rehearsal with the first couple acts. Those are more solid. I really felt like my scene partner, Ryan Feist, and I finally locked into the characters, connection, and pacing in Act three, Scene five. This is the scene where Pythia reveals her vision to Thyestes. We still had a few line flubs, but the blocking was more organic. Feist and I were really listening and responding to each other. Pythia also felt stronger as a character. I was working more confidently with my voice and physicality, which freed me up to make some more choices with tactics. I also found a kind of vocal quality tonight that I thought was less “witchy” sounding. It sounded more like a character voice and less like a cartoon. That pleased me. I hope I can find that same voice tomorrow night and continue with it!

Thursday, January 14, 2021

The first act of the play went really well tonight. I really felt connected to Hippodamia. I felt powerful. My voice felt strong and full of rage. I even got teary eyed when my sons were banished from the kingdom. That doesn’t always happen onstage. I felt like I had easier access to my emotions for some reason. There was also some great connection happening between my scene partners and I. I love it when things really feel like they click. Last night with Pythia I had that moment and today I had it with Hippodamia.

That makes it a little disappointing that the Pythia scene got a little jumbled up tonight. But, oh well. At least I know I have better access to the character now despite line and pacing issues.

There is a moment in the second scene that I am still struggling to figure out. Hippodamia is watching her sons beat on her step-son, Chryssipus, who she hates. Chryssipus declares that their father thinks he will be a better king than Atreus and Thyestes. This makes the boys angry. They take a moment to look back at their mother, Hippodamia before they start beating him again, killing him. I have questions about why they are looking back at him. How do they know she is still there watching? But most of all, what is Hippodamia thinking at this moment? To me, it feels like she is giving them permission to kill him. I almost want to give them a small nod to show this. In the script, it says that Hippodamia gets angry and storms off. I think she is supposed to be angry about Chryssipus thinking he is better than her sons and that her husband might give him the throne over her own sons. I get that... And she is... but why do they look back at her? To confirm that this is true? I suppose so, since she is the one who feeds this idea to Atreus to manipulate him. Perhaps I will try giving a nod of confirmation tomorrow and see if Jordán says anything. I may even ask him about it if there is enough time.

Friday, January 15 - Sunday, January 17, 2021

These three rehearsals were about adding all of the tech elements. We now have a full show up on its feet with lights, sound, and costumes.

Saturday night I came into rehearsal with a lot of energy, feeling ready to go. I thought both of my roles went really well. I was delighted when Jordán gave me the note that Pythia came across perfectly. However, I was a little perplexed when he said Hippodamia was not grounded and was all over the place. I did have high energy, and I was trying new things, but I didn't think it was that off character. Apparently, it was not what Jordán wanted to see. I do think that he sees Hippodamia as very calculated, with premeditated actions. My energy was a little more forward moving, with discoveries happening in the moment. I think that is what he meant by not grounded.

The next rehearsal on Sunday, his notes switched. Hippodamia was great and back to where he liked her before. He said to keep it. He didn't like Pythia as much because of the blocking I tried tonight. I didn't face out toward the audience as much tonight, but interacted with Feist more in the scene. Taking more moments to look away from who I am talking to adds to the mystery of the character, I think in Jordán's eyes. But overall, he still thought it was good. So, I don't know if I will ever get both characters just the way the director wants on the same night. In the end, I am happy with where both characters have finally landed. Jordán said Sunday night that he was really happy with where the show is at right now, so I think that takes that feeling of stress off everyone else too. All of the parts are working together as they should be.

Speaking of parts, my Hippodamia costume makes me feel so beautiful. It fits well, is comfortable and has elegance that makes me feel powerful. I just love it when a costume can help you feel and support the character you've built. I must congratulate Morgan Benson, the costume designer, next time I see her.

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

Tonight we had an audience! It was interesting having a preview after not having a rehearsal the night before due to Martin Luther King Jr. day. The show went perfectly fine, overall. My energy was definitely very off. I was tired coming into performance, and I could not seem to get my energy up the whole night. Perhaps, I should have tried to listen to some music or something else energizing before going on stage.

I felt particularly disconnected from Pythia tonight. I felt like I was trying to play the character so hard, instead of living in it. I hate that feeling. However, there is always a performance or two where that just happens. One can't be "on" every single night. I can try to use the tools I have to help, but in the end, I am just a human! Jordán seemed very happy with everything, so that is excellent.

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

I came into tonight feeling much more energized. Despite it being a really busy, non-stop day, I managed to scrape up some energy coming into tonight. I really love the "pre-show" routine. Right before the show can be so nerve-wracking. But there is something about the process of putting on makeup, costumes, checking props, running lines, chatting casually with the other girls in the dressing room... It can really calm me. If I miss part of my routine, I can feel a bit scattered.

It's funny, I had a therapy session today. It was only my second session here in Mankato. I've been to therapy a long time ago, and have been meaning to return. I finally made an appointment last month. We were talking about some of the things I wanted to

work on. My therapist pointed out after I had been talking for a little bit that, “it sounds like routine is important to you.” I never realized before just how important it was in my everyday life. In fact, I usually think I don’t want too much routine because scheduling myself down to the minute feels really limiting to me and can cause anxiety. I never realized how much knowing what is coming next in my day, is also calming. Maybe it’s because I am getting older. Or maybe it’s because we live in this chaotic world right now where anything could change in a second. I’ve been living in that swirling vortex especially this last semester. I felt like the rug was constantly being swept out from underneath me. Having a routine makes me feel a little more in control, knowing a little more what to expect, what comes next. I have something more concrete to cling to. Just another life lesson that can be applied to theatre as well.

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Another performance went off without a hitch tonight. I think we are starting to find our groove. I didn’t feel like I made any new discoveries tonight. Everything just went fine. Which is fine!

I am sitting backstage now as the photocall is happening. I typically never enjoy photocalls for any play I’ve been in. The hurry up and wait, changing in and out of costumes and makeup, and standing perfectly still while cameras flash around you... AFTER you’ve already exhausted yourself putting all your energy into a show... it’s not my idea of a good time. It is part of the process in which I need to practice patience. Thankfully things seem to be going relatively quickly. They also cut back on the original



list of shots they wanted as well, so that should help. I just hope we get out of here before midnight.

Sunday, January 24, 2021

Another successful run of a show. The other performances went well, with no particular problems or successes. It has been a stressful experience, putting this show together, but a learning experience as well. I hope to take those things I learned and carry them with me. Now, I must move on to my next project, getting *Planet Protectors* on its feet! Hopefully after that, I will have earned some well deserved rest.

## CHAPTER IV

### POST PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

The following chapter examines the creative acting process of Lindsey Oetken playing the roles of Hippodamia and Pythia in the production of *Atrous*. The performance was produced by Minnesota State University, Mankato and was written and directed by Yaureybo Jordán.

The first thing Oetken realized early in the process was that the two characters she portrayed needed to be easily distinguishable from each other. She and director, Jordán, worked together from the start to make each character contrasting. Oetken found it most important to make the Pythia character completely unlike herself and the character of Hippodamia. There needed to be a physical and vocal transformation.

Jordán often referred to Pythia as “serpent-like.” Oetken drew on techniques learned in Advanced Acting Techniques to take qualities of a snake and embody them. She began by shifting her posture to have an s-curve in her spine. She added slithering movements of the head. Additionally, she would elongate the syllabic “s” in her speech to mimic the hissing sound of a snake. The qualities remained throughout most of the rehearsal process. Some of the extreme “s-curve” of her body lessened once she was in costume. The effect couldn’t be seen beneath the large cloak she wore as a costume. However, she kept the overall feeling of snake-like movements in her walking. More was done with her head and neck since that is what could be seen. She also added gestures

with her hands that were less snake-like and more reminiscent of a witch. She kept her fingers partially curled so that her hands and fingers were never fully extended when gesturing.

She also explored vocal techniques learned in Theatre Speech II. When Jordán suggested that Oetken's voice needed a more extreme change to differentiate from Hippodamia, she first tried to raise the pitch of her voice, exploring a more breathy quality. For the character of Hippodamia, Oetken used vocal qualities closer to her natural speaking voice but allowing it to be stronger and more resonant, in order to show her queenly strength. However, the higher, breathy voice came across as too girlish. Jordán asked the actor if she could be "creepier." After more discussion, Jordán suggested Oetken try a vocal fry quality. It took some time throughout the process for Oetken to figure out how to use the vocal fry in a way that she could project in a larger space, in a healthy way, and without the voice sounding too much like a cartoon witch. The end result was a lower pitched sound with selective vocal fry.

Overall, Oetken was able to successfully make the two characters very different. Each stood on their own. The director was happy with the results.

One of the main themes of the play was that of power and revenge. They are the perpetuating factors in each character's actions. Jordán was very specific in his staging to ensure clarity in those power shifts. It took a little time for Oetken to understand this, but in each rehearsal, she started to understand Jordán's thought process more. When a character is facing upstage and their scene partner is facing downstage, the one facing downstage has power. Having one person up on a platform gives them power. Even little

details like when a character looks at the other person can make the power dynamic shift. Sometimes these little details would frustrate Oetken, because only being able to move her head or look at her scene partners in specific moments felt controlling. But especially during performances, once everyone was in costume and connecting with their respective characters, those power dynamics drove the action of the play forward, especially when there is a lot of dialogue happening and less physical action.

Perhaps one of the most interesting and challenging aspects of this particular project is the circumstances of the world in this moment. In acting, this is called the given circumstances. The given circumstances during this show created several challenges. Doing live theatre during a global health crisis has its serious risks, and rewards. In early 2020 the world was rocked with an outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. Daily routines have had to change drastically in order to adapt to living in an age where the number one goal is to prevent the spread of a dangerous disease, keeping ourselves and each other safe. Faculty, staff and students have had to debate the risks of potential transmission versus the quality of education a student receives working on theatre live as opposed to filmed, or not at all. Some would say that the university made a dangerous decision by allowing students to perform in person. Others would say it was a bold one. The truth is, everything is uncertain. There are no good answers. The only truth is that we need to keep everyone as safe as possible, adapting and continuing our lives as best we can.

During the production of *Atreus*, there were several challenges to overcome, including adapting to new rules, including use of facial covers, six foot social distancing, and constant monitoring of health and symptoms. Perhaps the most frustrating, yet most

crucial challenge was that of cast members needing to quarantine for two weeks after potential exposure. Because of this issue, understudies were implemented in order to combat the potential absence of a cast member due to quarantine or illness.

Since *Atreus* rehearsal process didn't start until late October, most of the cast and crew had a few months since the return to school in the fall to adjust to wearing face coverings and to practice social distancing, in life, and during the rehearsal process. It is a very different game, acting, when an actor loses access to half of their own face as well as their scene partners. Part of the actor's instrument is out-of-order. One must discern or portray the story using more vocal skills and physicality to enhance what one misses due to the mask. An actor must also use eye contact as an important tool in connecting with their partner on stage.

The six foot distance rule was also a difficult adjustment. An adjustment that does not come naturally to actors, who have been taught to use physical touch and closeness as tactics to get what their character needs from their scene partner, particularly in moments of intimacy. For Oetken's character of Hippodamia, she desperately wanted to reach out to touch her son, Atreus, in order to comfort him after he had been beaten by his father. Instead, she needed to stand away from him, and soothe him as best she could with the tones of her voice. Another instance where physical proximity could have been beneficial to her character, was when she was trying to intimidate her step-son, Chrysipuss. Instead of being able to lord over him, she had to stand further away, sending as much physical *energy* toward him as she could, and again, using her voice as the main tool of intimidation.

Perhaps the biggest challenge of the show was having cast members gone from the physical space, due to exposure to COVID. From the beginning of the rehearsal process, there were cast members attending rehearsal over the digital platform Zoom. There were one or two actors who were quarantined for the first week and a half of rehearsal. Rehearsing the moment of intimidation as mentioned earlier, felt silly with no actual person to intimidate. At one point, the director jumped in just so that Oetken had some sort of physical reaction to play off of.

It became more frustrating and challenging when Oetken herself was exposed to the virus during the rehearsal process. Oetken had already been ill with COVID-19 in September. The university was allowing a ninety day grace period to those who had been sick. If they were exposed in that time period, they didn't need to quarantine. Oetken was exposed by a fellow cast member's daughter, who she baby-sat on a Saturday afternoon. She wasn't worried after she found out about the exposure until she started developing symptoms of a cold. Her fear that she was re-infected with COVID led her to stay home from several rehearsals and attend online.

Not being able to be in the space was very hard for Oetken. She is a kinesthetic learner. She needs to be moving and doing the thing in order to truly understand it. Without feeling the energies of her castmates, it made connecting to the material and to her colleagues impossible. Thankfully, the second COVID test came back negative and she was able to return to rehearsal. But that same exposure took out two other cast members, both of whom were Oetken's main scene partners in the first act. When she came back to rehearsal, she was nearly alone on stage, acting with ghosts, the voices of

her cast mates floating from a tinny lap-top speaker in the back of the theatre, no physical manifestation whatsoever. Oetken had to rely heavily on her imagination to manifest her scene partners.

While this was not an ideal situation, having to rely on only herself on stage was a good skill to realize. It reminded Oetken of when she was working for the Missoula Children's Theatre as a Tour Actor/Director or TAD. As a TAD, each week she and her partner would cast and teach a short musical with a group of up to 64 children. One TAD would direct the show, while the other TAD acted a character in the play with the kids. If a child forgot a line or if there was some kind of incident that happened on stage (costume malfunctions, injuries, peed pants), the acting TAD had to improvise their way through the scene, "saving" the kids on stage so that the show could move forward. Those children relied on her to carry the show if something went wrong. While it was not easy, having to adapt quickly and to carry a show through no matter what happens, is an extremely important skill for an actor to have.

By the last rehearsal, a third to half of the cast was quarantined or ill with the virus. Delegating scene change jobs was messy. The cast members who were there in person were doing entire scenes missing multiple characters. Then, because of a rise in infection in the community, the university started shutting down all extracurriculars and moving classes online. Because of this, *Atreus* was unable to have its last few in person rehearsals before Thanksgiving Break. The university already had all classes moving online after break, with no rehearsals happening in person. The cast and crew would come back from winter break and start *Atreus* immediately coming back to school,

jumping right into tech week before they were truly ready. Additionally, each cast member was given another part to learn as understudy, in case someone became ill or exposed over the winter break. The time crunch was challenging, but thankfully in the end, the production was able to come off without a hitch. It is amazing with hard work, perseverance, and teamwork, what a group of people can achieve and overcome.

It is Oetken's last year of graduate school, with many life changes in the near future. The nation was deciding which leader would best to heal the divided, broken country. The world is in a war with a rampant virus that is killing and hurting billions of its citizens. For Oetken, the most challenging part during all of the chaos, unknown, and adapting, was keeping her mental and emotional health in check. Without it, she could not have made it through this production. On the other hand, if she was feeling more stable, she could have done a lot more with her part of the production.

It is hard to be a leader when you are suffering. It is hard to be positive when you feel negative. It is hard to pull someone else out of the water, when you, yourself, are drowning. The last semester of grad school has pushed Oetken past her limits in many ways. She is not alone in this. The world is suffering. When you are suffering, and everyone around you is suffering in one way or another, how do things get done properly? Sometimes they don't. Sometimes we simply get by. We survive. While Oetken tried her best to put on her bravest face throughout the process of producing *Atreus*, she did not always succeed. Her heart was not in it. The play was not her passion. And her battery was depleted. It was not her best work, but she did the best she could, considering the circumstances.



The biggest regret, as a result of this, is not standing up for her artistic ideas. Jordán had very specific and strong ideas about what the characters in the show should look, sound, act. They were characters imagined from his own head, so this is not surprising! It is also good for a director to have strong ideas of what the play is about and how it should be realized. However, it is also important for the director to be collaborative and open to the actor's ideas. Especially as the actors are the ones embodying these characters. When the director becomes so specific with direction that the actor feels creatively limited, that becomes a problem. Perhaps the best example is the character of Pythia. Jordán wanted Pythia to be a creepy, mysterious woman. There many ways "creepy" and "mysterious" could be achieved. Oetken tried several different ways vocally and physically to show this. Before she could continue working further with one she was trying, Jordán said it wasn't right and suggested another type of voice quality. Oetken tried to please Jordán, although she felt it was not quite right herself for the character. It felt too caricature-like instead of character-like. Once Jordán was pleased with this choice, she didn't feel she had room to play with other ideas. That choice was set in stone.

Now, true collaboration would have meant that Oetken took time before or after rehearsal to have a meeting with Jordán. She should have explained how she felt, and worked with him to come to a compromise where both parties are happy with the result. However, Oetken was so drained, energetically, she didn't feel she had what it took to fight it. It may not have even been a hard fight, in hindsight. It is possible, Jordán could have taken this very positively and been open to trying something new. But everything

felt like a battle at this point in the semester. Oetken couldn't take another battle. So she put her energies into pleasing the director.

In the end, she feels she achieved what the director wanted, but lost a little part of her creative license in the process. It is no one's fault but her own. It is a regret, but one she feels wasn't an option at the time. It was a moment of "picking battles." If she were to find herself in a similar situation down the road, Oetken would very much like to choose the option of speaking up for herself and attempting to collaborate, instead of relinquishing her creative powers. Communication is the key to collaboration. The actor must use their voice to advocate not only for themselves, but the safety of their colleagues, and the integrity of the play.

The overall process of *Atreus* was a challenging one. With any challenge comes lessons learned. Taking care of oneself, body and soul. Choosing battles. Standing up for artistic processes. These are the lessons learned during this particular production.

## CHAPTER V

### PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

This chapter discusses how the actor, Lindsey Oetken, has developed as an artist and craftsperson during her time attending graduate school. Oetken has had a unique graduate school journey, starting with an academic year at Long Island University Post (LIU) in Brookville, NY, and continuing her MFA candidacy at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Oetken had several hopes in applying for grad school. The first was to fill in gaps that her liberal arts undergraduate program did not focus on for a non-acting specific degree. The next was to hone in on several skills such as physicality in acting, increased voice and speech work, and to learn more about the business side of theatre. Through achieving an MFA in Acting, she hopes to make a living more central to theatre and acting. Lastly, she wants to feel an increase in confidence and self-esteem as an artist.

As an actor, one of Oetken's greatest goals and growths since starting graduate school has been the engagement of physicality in acting. Oetken's goal is to be more confident in taking risks, to have greater control and to have both a formal and creative vocabulary in physicality. The actor has always found the voice to be a stronger tool in her character work than physicality. Sometimes while working on a role this would result in a "talking head" type of acting. The upper half of the body would be engaged in the story, but the rest of the body was stagnant. This resulted in a lack of interesting choices

onstage, making the actor feel “stuck,” unsure how to motivate the movement. Oetken initially chose LIU because of the physical theatre techniques around which the program was centered.

At LIU, Oetken was introduced to the Suzuki methodology wherein the actor builds an “animal energy” and a controlled center of gravity through which the body and voice conveys a story. It requires maximum body-awareness from the actor’s perspective, and constant focus and engagement. It also teaches a unique actor/audience relationship. The basic stomps, walks and centers of gravity, as well as rules of the method were taught in Beginning Suzuki the first semester.

The second semester, the Suzuki techniques were expanded on in PostModern Theatre Practices. Professor Maria Porter developed her own pedagogy that combines Suzuki, ViewPoints, Chekov and techniques from the Odin Theatre in Denmark, then layered them with Stanislavski Realism. Students composed pieces with their bodies, inspired by song lyrics. They also explored Greek, Modern (Beckett) and Chuck Mee texts using Porter’s techniques. The focus was on spinal engagement, foot to floor relationship, and physical motivation through text analysis. Oetken found this class to be one of the most challenging experiences as an actor and student. She didn’t fully understand all of the techniques and their purposes. Despite this, she was able to take away some perspective from the class. She found that she did learn to fully engage the body, to be specific in movement, and actor presence.

Another physical theater class Oetken took at LIU was Lecoq Techniques taught by Elena Zucker. The class centered around mime and movement utilizing neutral masks.

Students were fully engaged both physically and creatively each class period, slowly building a twenty minute physical “journey” performed with neutral masks during finals. The most important lesson from the class was teaching the body how to take up space and make a physical “presence” on stage. Using the masks, the actor couldn’t rely on the facial expressions or voice at all, so the story had to be told with specific gestures and presence.

One part of theatrical physicality that wasn’t addressed in the curriculum at LIU was dance. Oetken does not have a background in dance and has been wanting the physical vocabulary of dance in her body for a while. She took the initiative to sign up for a beginning ballet class.

Oetken found ballet both soothing and challenging. She enjoyed barre work, learning how to engage every muscle and properly execute each movement. The challenge came bringing the barre work to the center and combining each movement into actual choreography. In the end, Oetken was able to execute a full song in performance for the final and choreograph a small two minute piece using the forms she was taught. Control and engagement of muscles was the big takeaway from ballet.

She further explored dance at Minnesota State University, Mankato by taking a tap class her first semester. Never having taken a tap class before, Oetken found the fast pace to be a challenge. Nevertheless, any kind of practice learning choreography or finding new forms in the body is beneficial.

Perhaps the favorite movement class she has taken, and most relevant to daily life, is the Vinyasa Yoga class Oetken took her last year at Minnesota State University,

Mankato. While Oetken had been a regular practitioner of yoga prior to graduate school, practicing in a school setting and the instructor, Julie Kerr-Berry, opened her up to a whole new experience. In the past, Oetken had not taken formal, in-person classes regularly. She primarily did at-home practice. She discovered as the semester moved on how beneficial it was to have yoga built into her daily routine. Not only did it help to combat the daily stresses of graduate school, but also helped to build strength and flexibility in her physical body. The spiritual mantras and intentions that were offered at the beginning and end of class, taught Oetken to unify her body, mind and breath.

Theatre students do not often get time to themselves. They run from class, to work, to rehearsal, then to homework. Having yoga twice a week created a time where Oetken knew she would have a moment of the day when she could wholly focus on her body and mind for fifty minutes, built into her schedule. It was crucial for her mental health, particularly in the last year of grad school, which is already stressful, on top of the world crises of a global pandemic. She also enjoyed the community setting as well. Sharing this unique individual experience with her classmates was very special. What she has learned in yoga she can not only bring into her theatre practice, but into her everyday life as well. As Kerr-Berry often says, “carry this yoga-buzz with you the rest of the day.”

This new sense of physical awareness has been truly beneficial to Oetken in the roles she has had since coming to Minnesota State University, Mankato. During *Cloud 9*, her debut production, she was able to incorporate the stamina and focus from Suzuki training. The challenge of being at a new school, working with new people and in a short time period putting up an ambitious show, required immense energy and focus. The idea

of presence and control over the body was used for Queen Elizabeth I in her next production, *Shakespeare in Love*. The character's regality and power required a straight spine and pure magnetism. In the production of *Atrous*, Oetken needed to differentiate two distinctly different characters in the same show. One of the main challenges was ensuring that Hippodamia and Pythia were nothing alike. The Advanced Acting Techniques class helped her to access this physicality even further. The animal character unit as well as the training in Michael Chekov's technique, allowed her to develop the difference in physicality and energies more easily.

Through productions and theatre speech classes Oetken has renewed and deepened her interest in speech and dialects. In productions she has been part of at Minnesota State Mankato, each character has needed a distinct voice to develop the character. In *Cloud 9*, Oetken portrayed the character of Maud, a Victorian era grandmother. Because the character is quite a bit older than Oetken, the actor worked with the director, Seth Honerman, to find a voice to fit her character. They discussed lowering the pitch of the voice as one way to portray an older character. Oetken drew on exercises and techniques learned in her voice and speech class in undergrad, as well as the qualities of voice section learned in Theatre Speech II at Minnesota State Mankato to achieve this. Oetken also worked on affecting the voice and dialect with specific "posh" sound to satirize the grandmother's upper class Victorian era society. The character Oetken portrayed in the second act, Vic, is a 1970s modern London woman. Oetken brought the timbre and pitch of her voice back to its normal speaking range and then adjusted the dialect so that it still was still upper class, but more grounded, not as

affected. Oetken also applied these techniques in *Atreus*. While there was no dialect used in this show, playing with tone, vocal qualities, and resonance was important to the development of her roles in this production, particularly that of Pythia.

The first three shows in which she was cast at Minnesota State Mankato required a type of British Dialect. She had been coached in Standard British before in other productions in the past but had never officially taken a dialects class. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to take the dialects class offered until her last semester at Minnesota State Mankato, so she couldn't apply it to the productions she was in. However, now that she knows the International Phonetic Alphabet, and the general practice of substitutions, she feels equipped to perform a new dialect for future roles. She is very much interested in dialects and would like to explore more of them.

Another area of increased interest has been writing and researching for a role. Classes like Theatre Scene Studies and Theatre Research, taught by Heather Hamilton, both require in depth analysis and research to explore a character. In addition to in-class writing, the major and minor project paper requirements for the MFA program at Minnesota State Mankato have reminded Oetken of the importance of research and deep reflection on the part of the actor. The effectiveness of the journaling requirement of the projects surprised Oetken. In the past, Oetken has found the usefulness of journals to be inconsistent. There were times during this particular process of writing about her character or a rehearsal when Oetken made a useful discovery through reflection. Taking time for research and self-reflection has become an important part of Oetken's process in building a character and will be implemented more in her future acting roles.



Overall, the entire process of graduate school has significantly impacted Oetken's growth as a person and as an artist. From first auditioning and applying, to deciding to transfer to a new school, grad school has been an emotional roller coaster and a huge life lesson. Firstly, self-confidence and belief in her work as an artist has always been challenging. After what Oetken has experienced, she feels much stronger by overcoming so many obstacles. Taking risks as a person and an artist has become a principal in her way of life. Transferring to Minnesota State University, Mankato has especially renewed feelings of confidence in her own skills. While LIU opened her up artistically in many ways, she did not have support or validation in her abilities from her faculty or cohort. At Minnesota State Mankato, Oetken feels valued and knowledgeable. Oetken continues to push herself to be a confident leader in the department and take that confidence with her through life.

Perhaps the most important thing Oetken took from LIU as an artist was the importance of cultivating creativity, collaboratively and freeing the imagination. Sometimes in the structure of the traditional director/actor relationship, the creative aspect of acting can become limited. Oetken found the concept of devised theatre to be very freeing. Oetken participated in a devising class through which there was a lab/performance component. With her six other classmates, she built a play. They were in complete control of the content of their play *Memento Mori*, from top to bottom: designing, producing, writing, acting. It was an extremely invigorating and challenging task with great feeling of accomplishment in the end. Oetken's belief in collaborative theatre grew immensely through this process. It also bolstered her confidence in her

abilities to lead a major creative project like this in the future. Oetken would like to find more ways to implement the collaboration and creativity she learned at LIU in her professional life.

Additionally, Oetken has learned perseverance. She was not accepted into the grad schools to which she first applied. By the time she found this out it was too late to apply to most other schools she was interested in at the time. The next year she was accepted to LIU, after attending the University Resident Theatre Auditions in Chicago. The academic year at LIU was a lesson in learning how to fail. Feeling completely out of place and massively under-supported in New York, Oetken decided that going back to LIU would not be healthy. Instead of pulling out of graduate school altogether, Oetken tried to find a place in the Midwest that would let her finish her degree, in a more supportive environment.

Now she has found success and respect at Minnesota State University, Mankato and feels rewarded for her perseverance. Naturally, as in all cycles of life, once happiness was found in a new graduate school, the COVID-19 pandemic rocked the world, greatly affecting Oetken's academic experience in her last year of school. Once again, she found herself climbing uphill to overcome the challenges of online classes, safety restrictions in class and rehearsals, and general dread of getting sick, which Oetken did. On the opening night of the production *Silent Sky*, Oetken was forced to stay home due to illness. She was honored and excited to perform the main role of Henrietta Leavitt. Oetken and the whole cast and crew had been working so hard to get the show on its feet in a short amount of time, and suddenly, she was sick with COVID-19. The future of her role and

the production was unsure. Several other theatre students got sick around this same time. The department took a three week break from in-person classes and all productions were postponed in order to prevent an outbreak. Thankfully, Oetken recovered enough to perform after that three week period was over. The challenges didn't stop there, as she recovered slowly from the illness. She battled catching up with homework and keeping the other project she was working on, directing the Children's Tour production of *Planet Protectors*, on track. Not without major struggle, these challenges were eventually overcome. Persistence, once again, was important to Oetken's graduate school success. It continues to be.

In conclusion, Oetken has been able to put into her process as an actor, the many skills she has learned throughout graduate school. She has engaged and explored physicality in her characters. She has accomplished character work through voice and dialect. Her characters have achieved greater depth and humanity through her research and self-reflection. As an actor and craftsperson, creativity and imagination has blossomed and a more collaborative form of theatre has been discovered. Above all, perseverance and confidence has rocketed Oetken to a new level of artistry and lifestyle.

APPENDIX A  
PRODUCTION PHOTOS



Imag. 1 Hippodamia, played by Oetken, asks the gods why she was cursed with a son that is not her blood.



Imag. 2 Hippodamia (Oetken) swears that Chrysippus will never become King of Olympia.



Imag. 3 King Pelops, played by Seth Honerman, demands Hippodamia (Oetken) be a good mother to all of their children.





Imag. 4 Hippodamia (Oetken) threatens Chrysippus, played by Christian Tesch.



Imag. 5 Hippodamia (Oetken) observes as Atrous (Ben Siglin) and Thyestes (Ryan Feist) threaten Chrysippus (Tesch).



Imag. 6 Pythia (Oetken) tells Thyestes (Feist) that he must have a son with his daughter Pelopia (McKenna Prill).





Imag. 7 Pythia (Oetken) warns Thyestes (Feist) that he no longer has other options.



## APPENDIX B

## PROGRAM

## 2020-2021 MAINTAGE SEASON

**Hair**

October 14-18 &amp; 21-25, 2020

**The Tempest**

November 4-8 &amp; 11-15, 2020

**Angel Street**

November 18-20, 2020

**Sense and Sensibility**

February 17-21 &amp; 24-28, 2021

**Mamma Mia!**

April 7-11 &amp; 14-18, 2021

## STUDIO SEASON

**Silent Sky**

October 9-11, 2020

**Atreus**

January 19-24, 2021

**Desdemona: A Play About A Handkerchief**

March 24-28, 2021

**Next Fall**

April 21-25, 2021

## DANCE CONCERTS

**Fall Dance Concert**

Online in December 2020

**Spring Dance Concert**

April 30 &amp; May 1, 2021



MINNESOTA STATE

Minnesota State University, Moorhead  
A member of Minnesota State

## THEATRE AND DANCE FACULTY AND STAFF

**Scott Anderson**

Costumer

**Matthew Caron**

Managing Director

**Corrie Eggimann**

Public Relations Director

**George Grubb**

Technical Director/Sound Design

**Beverly Gruenzner-Kragh**

Business/Office Manager

**Heather E. Hamilton**

Acting and Directing

**Julie Kerr-Berry**Chair, Department of  
Theatre and Dance**David McCarl**

Costume Design

**John David Paul**

Scene Design

**Vladimir Rovinsky**

Acting and Movement

**Steven Smith**

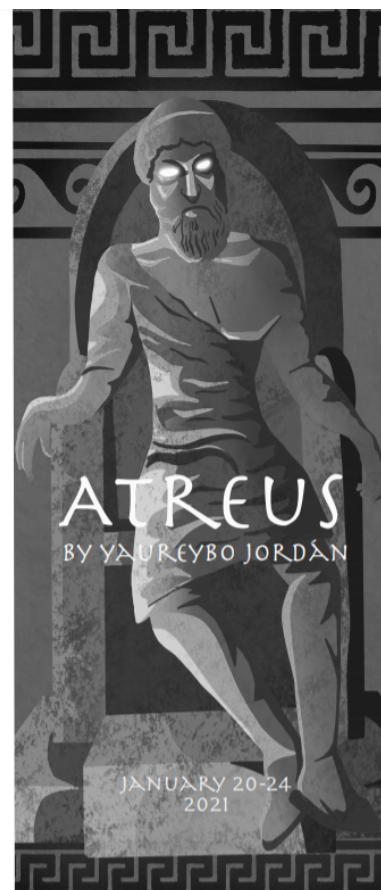
Lighting Design

**Daniel Stark**

Director of Dance

**Nicholas Wayne**

Musical Director

MINNESOTA STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
MANKATOAn Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity University. This document is available in  
alternative format to individuals with disabilities by calling the Department of Theatre  
and Dance at 507-389-6663 (V), 800-627-3529 or 711 (MSR/TTY).

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It's always thrilling to make your own play take life on stage. By linking the stories of Atreus from a variety of sources, I was able to create a play fully focused on him and offer the audience access to a new tragedy about an old Greek myth.

Intertwining themes like destiny, gods, power, empathy, redemption, and faith, I present a play about Atreus' life. He is not the usual protagonist and may not be an ideal person, but frailty is human, and he wants to tell his story to whoever is willing to listen.

I thank the faculty for the opportunity to present the play as part of my thesis. I also thank the cast and crew for doing an amazing job bringing the story to life for the first time in the States.

Finally, I thank my wife for the help and support during the whole process even with our firstborn on the way! Oh, and his name is Tiago, not Aegisthus, just in case you were wondering.

Yaureybo Jordán

## CAST

Atreus.....**Ben Siglin**  
 Thyestes.....**Ryan Joseph Feist**  
 Syneida.....**Emma Inga**  
 Hippodamia/Pythia.....**Lindsey Oetken**  
 Shepherdess/Calaeus.....**Allyson Bryson**  
 Pelops/Head Cook.....**Seth M. Honerman**  
 Guard #1/Soldier.....**Sam Smith**  
 Chrysippus/Hermes/Aglaus.....**Christian Tesch**  
 Aerope.....**Isabella Fox**  
 Sthenelus.....**Daniel Walker**  
 Pelopia.....**McKenna Prill**  
 Guard #2/Captain.....**Zac Gaulke**  
 Servant/Orchomenus/Guard...**William Hallock**  
 Servant/Aegisthus.....**Joaquin Warren**  
 Pleisthenes/Servant.....**Jacob Haen**

## SETTING

Ancient Greece  
 1300 BCE

ATREUS IS AN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION,  
 WRITTEN AND DIRECTED  
 BY YAUREYBO JORDÁN  
 2020

## PRODUCTION STAFF

**Yaureybo Jordán**  
 Director  
**Reina Beisell**  
 Production Stage Manager  
**Scott M. Anderson**  
 Scenic Design  
**Morgan Benson**  
 Costume Design  
**Jameson Bernhagen**  
 Lighting Design  
**Jason Wagaman**  
 Sound Design  
**Joshua Zeiste**  
 Technical Director  
**Sam Verdick**  
 Assistant Stage Manager  
**Rachel Reidburn**  
 Lightboard Operator  
**Ashley Himli**  
 Soundboard Operator  
**Ray L. Kloth**  
 Stagehand/Costume Crew  
**George Grubb**  
**Heather Hamilton**  
 Faculty Advisors  
**Emily Schumacher**  
 House Manager  
**Sam Verdick**  
 Original Poster Artwork

# APPENDIX C

## ATREUS REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

### October 2020 - January 2021

	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
<b>Week 10</b> OCT/ NOV	26 630-9:30pm ATREUS REHEARSAL BEGIN at <b>Room 113</b> -Table Work  <i>Begin costume build</i>	27 <b>BLOCKING</b> Blocking A2:S1-S3	28 Blocking A2:S4-S5	29 Blocking Prologue & A1:S1-S3	30 Blocking A3:S1, S3 & S4	31	1 TBA
<b>Week 11</b>	2 Blocking A3:S2, S5 & S6	3 Blocking A4:S1-S3 & Epilogue	4 <b>OFF BOOK</b> Work Prologue & A1:S1-S3	5 Work A2:S1-S3	6 Work A2:S4-S5	7	8 TBA
<b>Week 12</b>	9 Rehearsal at <b>Andreas Theatre</b>  Work A3:S1, S3 & S4  <i>Light plot due</i> <i>Begin light hang</i>	10  Work A4:S1-S3 & Epilogue	11  Run and Work Act 2	12  Run and Work Prologue & Act 1	13  Run and Work Act 3	14	15 TBA
<b>Week 13</b>	16 Run and Work Act 4 & Epilogue  <i>Sound plot due</i>	17 Run and Work Prologue, Act 1 & Act 2	18 Run and Work Act 3, Act 4 & Epilogue	19 <b>RUN THRU-&gt;</b> Complete play  <i>Light focus</i>	20 Run thru Complete play	21	22 TBA
<b>Week 14</b>	23 Run thru Complete play	24 Run thru Complete play	25 THANKSGIVING BREAK	26 THANKSGIVING BREAK	27 THANKSGIVING BREAK	28	29
<b>Week 15</b> Nov/ DEC	30 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	1 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	2 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	3 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	4 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	5	6
Christmas Break... Happy Holidays!							
<b>Week 1</b> JAN	11 Run thru Complete play	12 Run thru Complete play	13 Run thru Complete play  <i>Publicity Photo Call</i>	14 Run thru Complete play  <i>Light/Sound Tech</i>	15 Run thru Complete play  <i>1<sup>st</sup> Tech</i>	16 Run thru Complete play  <i>1<sup>st</sup> Dress</i>	17 Run thru Complete play
<b>Week 2</b>	18 (No rehearsal) Martin Luther King Day  <i>Console Out/House c/n</i>	19 <b>7:30PM STUDENT PREVIEW PERFORMANCE</b>	20 <b>7:30PM OPEN PERFORMANCE</b> <small>(25% capacity = 63 persons max.)</small>	21 <b>7:30PM PERFORMANCE</b>  <i>Production Photo call</i>	22 <b>7:30PM PERFORMANCE</b>	23 <b>2:00PM and 7:30PM PERFORMANCE</b>	24 <b>2:00PM LAST PERFORMANCE</b> -close/strike

APPENDIX D  
RESEARCH PHOTOS



Imag. 1 "Priestess of Delphi," by John Collier.



Imag. 2 Ancient depiction of an Oracle of Delphi.





Imag. 3 "The Oracle" (1880) by Camillo Miola.

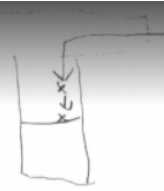


Imag. 4 Red-figure, Pythia giving a consultation at Delphi,  
5th century BC, Staatliche Museum, Berlin

## APPENDIX D

## SCRIPT NOTATIONS

**ACT 1**



**SCENE#1**  
EARLY IN THE MORNING, ATREUS AND THYESTES PLAY IN THE GARDEN OF THE PALACE.

*Enter USL*

HIPPODAMIA- (ENTERS WITH SYNEIDA.) Atreus, Thyestes, come in before your breakfast gets cold. (SYNEIDA DIRECTS ATREUS AND THYESTES TO THE INSIDE. ATREUS AND THYESTES EXIT.)

PELOPS- (ENTERS.) And Chrysippus?

HIPPODAMIA- I do not know. *- Back to Pelops*

PELOPS- How convenient. (TO SYNEIDA) Syneida, find Chrysippus and tell him it is time to eat. (TO HIPPODAMIA) You knew well where two of your children were, why not the third?

HIPPODAMIA- Maybe because I do not have time for strangers.

PELOPS- Hippodamia, we have already talked about that. As my wife, it is your duty to behave like his mother.

HIPPODAMIA- You cannot force me. *X DS several steps*

PELOPS- I can do that and much more. You do not want to see my fury... or Chrysippus', if he becomes King of Pisa. *Olumpia*

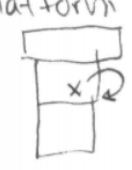
HIPPODAMIA- Chrysippus does not belong to the throne. *turn to face him + back again*

PELOPS- I decide who will occupy my throne. Although I have not chosen because they are still young, I will consider any of the three to take my place. Now, be a good mother and raise all your children well; and I do not want to hear more about it.

HIPPODAMIA- As you command, my King. (PELOPS EXITS AND SYNEIDA ENTERS WITH CHRYSIPPUS.) *X off platform L*

SYNEIDA- Madam, I found Chrysippus. The mischievous boy was playing near the lake and he knows well that it is forbidden. He does not know how to swim. (SYNEIDA VERIFIES THAT CHRYSIPPUS IS NOT A PARTY CR VET 5)

HIPPODAMIA- (MUTTERING) You should have let him drown



SYNEIDA-  
HIPPODAMIA-  
SYNEIDA -

Excuse me, my queen, what did you say?  
Nothing... take him inside. *angry*

Yes, immediately. (TO CHRYSIPPUS) Luckily, you did not get wet. Otherwise, we would have to change your clothes and you would have no food in your belly. (CHRYSIPPUS LAUGHS.) You laugh now? Let us see if you laugh when you die of hunger. Move on. (CHRYSIPPUS AND SYNEIDA EXITS. ATREUS ENTERS AND SEES HIPPODAMIA CONCERNED.)

ATREUS-  
HIPPODAMIA-

Mother, are you alright? *build anger*

Atreus, yes son, I am fine. I think. Go ahead and eat something. I will be there in a moment! (ATREUS HUGS HER AND EXITS.) Gods, why do you force me? Why do you all torture me with a son that is not mine? You cannot imagine how much I hate him. The only thought that comes to me when I see him is a family invaded by a harpy who took advantage of my fool husband. A harpy without honor... and I will not allow him to continue his legacy. Do you hear me? Chrysippus will not have the slightest chance to reign in Olympia. How? I do not know yet, but that I can swear. Soon Chrysippus will never see the sunlight again. (EXITS.)

*watch inhalations*  
*X toward Atreus*  
*X to center 2/3 of platform*  
*Exit USL*

SCENE #2  
LATER THAT MORNING.

SYNEIDA- (ENTERS.) Come on, get out. (ATREUS, THYESTES AND CHRYSIPPUS ENTER.) Go children, have fun and bother somebody else. (EXITS.)

PELOPS- (ENTERS.) Sons, wait. (WITH A PATERNAL TONE.) Have you cleaned your armor?

ATREUS- Do we really have to?

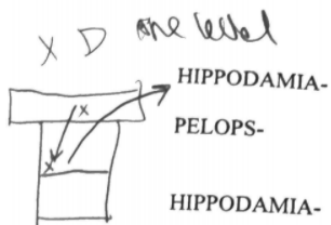
CHRYSIPPUS- (TO PELOPS) Yeah, that does not sound fun.

PELOPS- You are probably correct. It will not be, but by cleaning it you will have the opportunity to know its virtues and defects before battle.

ATREUS-

	will not accompany you to war.
ATREUS-	She can come if she wants.
THYESTES-	Ha! That will be hilarious.
ATREUS-	Do you imagine her...? ( <del>HIPPODAMIA ENTERS, BUT STAYS -</del> <del>HIDDEN.</del> ) <i>USL</i>
PELOPS-	(UPSET) Atreus! (SERIOUSLY) Go and clean it. Tomorrow you will train at sunrise.
ATREUS-	Yes, sir. (TO THYESTES) Come on. (THYESTES START WALKING TO THE EXIT, PELOPS STOPS ATREUS. CHRYSIPPUS NOTICES PELOPS GOSSIPING WITH ATREUS AND STAYS. THYESTES EXITS.)
PELOPS-	(ASIDE TO ATREUS.) Son, you are the eldest. You are responsible for you brothers and your family. Do not forget you are the son of a king. Now, do yourself a favor and start acting like one. (CHRYSIPPUS SEES ATREUS EXITS AND STARTS FOLLOWING HIM.)
PELOPS-	Chrysippus, wait. Come here. (CHRYSIPPUS GOES TO PELOPS) How do you feel, son? Are you alright?
CHRYSIPPUS-	Yes, I think.
PELOPS-	You know you can talk to me about anything, right?
CHRYSIPPUS-	Aha...
PELOPS-	(STARES AT CHRYSIPPUS FOR A MOMENT.) Come on, give your father a hug before you leave. (HUGS CHRYSIPPUS.) Try not to stain your clothes. (CHRYSIPPUS EXITS.)
HIPPODAMIA-	Let him get dirty. <i>X to Center Back platform</i>
PELOPS-	What are you saying? <i>1. 1. 1.</i>





Turn and  
face him.

step once

take a moment to rotate  
and exit

HIPPODAMIA-

PELOPS-

HIPPODAMIA-

PELOPS-

HIPPODAMIA-

PELOPS-

HIPPODAMIA-

PELOPS-

HIPPODAMIA-

PELOPS-

It was not Chrysippus you were looking at.

Hippodamia you are delirious. (PELOPS IS HEADING TOWARDS THE PALACE.)

Poor Chrysippus. (PELOPS STOPS.)

Clear your mind of hazy thoughts.

I think only about all the effort he will spend cleaning his armor. Pointless. When a person tries to clean what ~~they~~ he has stained, something dirty always stays in him.

If he knows how to scrape it, it will look like new.

He does not know how to scrape.

He will learn. (STARTS TO EXIT, BUT HIPPODAMIA GRABS HIS ARM.)

And if the stain does not come out? (PELOPS LOOKS AT HER SERIOUSLY.)

It has to come out... (RELEASED HIS ARM ABRUPTLY) for everyone's sake. (EXITS: HIPPODAMIA STAYS REFLECTING A FEW SECONDS AND ALSO EXITS.)

SCENE #3  
AT NOON.

ATREUS-

(ENTERS RUNNING.) I won!

THYESTES-

(ENTERS RUNNING TIRED.) It is not fair, you cheated.

ATREUS-

Of course not. I run faster, accept it.

THYESTES-

That is because you are older.

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